

## AFA president visits Wolf Pack

By Capt. Chris Karns  
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The Air Force Association's national president, John Politi and his wife, Terri, visited Kunsan April 6-7 to get better acquainted with its people, mission and Wolf Pack challenges.

AFA, an independent, non-profit, civilian aerospace organization, promotes public understanding of aerospace power and national defense. It prioritizes and voices the Air Force's need for quality of life improvements as well as the latest equipment and technology to members of Congress.

During their Kunsan visit, the Politis learned about the base's quality of life concerns and issues impacting the Wolf Pack.

"Some of the (Kunsan) infrastructure needs significant attention," said John Politi. "The shortage of dormitory space and some of the dormitories people are living in are far below the standards we have set for our men and women. People taking showers in brown water is totally unacceptable. The hardened aircraft shelters have issues that need to be worked. There is no scarcity of things we need to do to help the men and women of Kunsan Air Base."

However, despite these challenges, Politi is impressed with the measures senior leadership has taken to make quality of life improvements such as

opening the two new dormitories since Col. Philip Breedlove, 8th Fighter Wing commander, took command last year.

Since last May the base has constructed and acceptable four one-plus-one, 122-person single room dormitories for NCO and senior NCOs. The base has also renovated dormitories and funded more than \$800,000 in dorm furnishings, mattresses and appliances. Additional renovations are still being planned.

Plans for a new commissary and fitness center improvements are also in the works.

Even with all the recent upgrades, Politi indicated more Congressional support and improvement is required.

"There is a lot of progress being made," Politi said. "Despite the challenges, folks are doing a terrific job. We need to do a better job of (funding some) of the projects needed here at Kunsan and bringing the entire base up to the standards we've set for men and women who serve."

Politi is also impressed with the quality of people assigned to the Wolf Pack.

"The motivation, spirit and camaraderie is just incredible," Politi said. "There is a great desire to excel, a great desire to achieve and accomplish the mission. On behalf of everyone who serves in the Air Force Association, I'd like to thank members of the Wolf Pack for serving their country and making the sacrifice of serving in such a remote location. People do appreciate it."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Watson, 8th  
Staff Sgt. Jason Ford, 8th Security Forces Squadron, briefs John Politi, Air Force Association president, and his wife Terri, on the use of various weapons during their visit here Friday.

## AFA fights issues for airmen at Capitol Hill

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On a national level the Air Force Association is in the trenches with Air Force senior leadership fighting important issues for airmen so they can focus on national defense while considering a career in the Air Force.

"We appreciate the hard work, dedication, initiative and motivation of all men and women serving," said John Politi AFA national president. "It is very clear people are making sacrifices. It is also clear (airmen) face some challenges—they don't always have the (best) equip-

ment and facilities to do the job, yet they do it and do it in a fantastic way."

The AFA shows its appreciation by battling for improved quality of life in the areas of education, health care as well as base installation housing and infrastructure in need of repair, Politi said.

In fact, AFA supports the enlisted 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year program, the Air Force Team of the Year and offers various other awards, scholarships and grants to airmen and their families.

AFA also has a finger on the pulse of force modernization projects such as America's next air superiority fighter, the F-22 "Raptor".

Prioritizing quality of life issues as well as force capability programs to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the Air Force are the organization's top priorities.

"The AFA goes through a detailed process each year to identify Air Force critical requirements," Politi said. "We are continually striving to increase pay for our military members so we can close the gap between military and civilian pay...In the force capability (arena), force modernization and (more specifically), the F-22, is our single biggest priority right now. A very close second is working on infrastructure problems that have

occurred in recent years...We are here to educate Congress on these needs."

An example of AFA's dedication and success in championing force modernization efforts occurred in 1999 when the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee cut the entire \$1.8 billion production funding for the F-22. AFA members put out a call for action and made their voices heard in Congress.

"The AFA played a significant role in restoring funds for the F-22," Politi said. "The Air Force leadership has credited AFA with swinging the balance on that vote. AFA flooded elected officials (with facts) before the vote took place. We helped influence key members of Congress—we're a strong voice (dedicated to) supporting the Air Force."

Like the Air Force, Politi said the AFA draws its strength and power from its membership.

"Strength is shown in numbers when you go to Capitol Hill," Politi said. "If you represent 500 people you don't have a very loud voice. If you represent 150,000 (people), as we do, your voice is stronger. The more members we have, the more leverage we have when we deal with Congress."

The organization remains tuned in to Air Force "happenings" by visiting military installations and talking with airmen.

"We tell people, tell us what issues and problems there are so we have a better understanding of the problems we need to work on Capitol Hill," said Politi. "Knowing the issues will help us gather information and be better able to fight the battles in the political arena."

For additional information on AFA, access the organization's Web page at [www.afa.org](http://www.afa.org).

## Pride of the Pack



**Job:** 8th Logistics Group, Logistics Information Management chief

**Hometown:** Eagle Pass, Texas

**Follow-on:** Randolph AFB, Texas

**Family:** Adalia (wife), Ruben (son) and Tony (son)

**Hobbies:** Hiking, biking or any outdoor activity

**Words of wisdom:** "One only succeeds in life if you face your problems, not if you avoid them."

*The Pride of the Pack is nominated by his or her commander, first sergeant or supervisor, or any Wolf Pack member, for outstanding value to their unit and dedication to the mission. To nominate a Wolf Pack member, send a nomination to the individual's group commander.*



**Tech. Sgt. Ruben Gonzalez**